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Jaguar Galaxy

A Mayan myth says the coat of a jaguar represents the heavens of a starry night. Our cover background image was taken by the Hubble Telescope. The jaguar embodies life's power to protect children and the planet. Space reflects our field of being. Nature is a miracle. Over 100 years ago, Albert Einstein in his Miracle Year of 1905 released the theory of relativity and $E=mc^2$. Help create our 30th anniversary of Vancouver's Walk for Peace coming June 30th. There is no way to peace, peace is the way. Enjoy your own unique miracle month of May.

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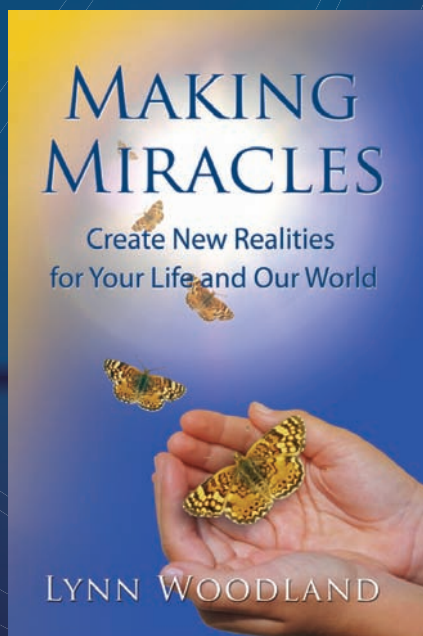
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Millions Against Monsanto

The Food Fight of Our Lives

Finally, public opinion around the biotech industry's contamination of our food supply and destruction of our environment has reached the tipping point. We're fighting back.

"If you put a label on genetically engineered food you might as well put a skull and crossbones on it." – Norman Braksick, president of Asgrow Seed Co., Monsanto subsidiary, *Kansas City Star*, March 7, 1994

"Monsanto should not have to vouchsafe the safety of biotech food. Our interest is in selling as much of it as possible. Assuring its safety is the FDA's job." – Phil Angell, Monsanto communication director, *New York Times*, October 25, 1998

For nearly two decades, Monsanto and corporate agribusiness have exercised near-dictatorial control over American agriculture, aided and abetted by indentured politicians and regulatory agencies, supermarket chains, and giant food processors.

This November, in a food fight that will largely determine the future of what we eat and what we grow, Monsanto will face its greatest challenge to date: a state-wide citizens' ballot initiative that will give Californians the opportunity to vote for their right to know whether the food they buy has GMOs.

A growing corps of food, health, and environmental activists - supported by the Millions against Monsanto and Occupy Monsanto Movements, and consumers and farmers across the nation - are boldly moving to implement mandatory labeling of genetically engineered foods in California through a grassroots-powered citizens ballot initiative process that will bypass the agribusiness-dominated state legislature.

Passage of this initiative on November 6 will radically alter the balance of power in the marketplace, enabling millions of consumers to identify - and boycott - genetically engineered foods for the first time since 1994, when Monsanto's first unlabeled, genetically-engineered dairy drug, recombinant Bovine Growth Hormone (rBGH), was forced on the US market.

This is not the first time Monsanto has been challenged by citizens' initiatives or state and local legislative efforts. But this time, the momentum is in our favor.

In the past, GMO "right-to-know" activists have been outmaneuvered and outgunned by Monsanto and its minions in every state, except Vermont and Connecticut, where passing a labeling bill is still, at least theoretically, a long-shot. Monsanto recently threatened to sue the state of Vermont if legislators there pass a GMO labeling bill.

Efforts to pass GMO labeling laws at the federal level have gone nowhere, despite the fact that more than one million consumers have emailed "Just Label It" petitions to the FDA, demanding mandatory labeling. The FDA counted only 394 of the signatures claiming that the main petition was submitted as a single document, or docket, and therefore counted as only one signature.

The battle has been raging for decades. But this time, it's different.

Behind this historic California initiative is a broad, growing and powerful health, environmental, and consumer coalition, which includes the Organic Consumers Association, Organic Consumers Fund, Food Democracy Now!, Mercola.com, Nature's Path, Lundberg Family Farms, LabelGMOs.org, Eden Foods, Alliance for Natural Health, Dr. Bronner's, United Farm Workers Union, American Public Health Association, Cornucopia Institute, Institute for Responsible Technology, Sierra Club, Rainforest Action Network, California Certified Organic Farmers, and scores of others.

This time, the industry faces informed - and alarmed - consumers who understand the danger of allowing out-of-control chemical and biotech companies like Monsanto, Dow, or Dupont - the very same corporations that have assaulted us with toxic pesticides and industrial chemicals, Agent *cont'd p.16...*



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This little piggy will be GMO-free

After more than 10 years, active research into the genetically modified (GM or genetically engineered) pig called “Enviro-pig” is being abandoned. In late March, the hog industry group Ontario Pork decided to stop funding GM pig research at the University of Guelph and the university is now closing down its active research and ending its breeding program of GM pigs.

Scientists at the university began their research in 1995. In 1999, a team of three researchers in molecular and cellular biology, led by Dr. Cecil Forsberg, named their first GM pig “Wayne.” The university patented the technology in Canada, the US and China.

In a surprising announcement, Dr. Forsberg told the *New York Times* on April 3, “I had the feeling in seven or eight or nine years that transgenic animals probably would be acceptable. But I was wrong.” He added, “It’s time to stop the program until the rest of the world catches up.” Nonetheless, the GM pig is technologically irrelevant as well as socially unacceptable and is therefore unlikely to ever be commercially attractive. The pig was engineered with genetic material from a mouse and E-coli bacteria to produce less phosphorus in its feces. It could have become the first GM food animal in the

world, but it was never needed and it was always controversial. Consumer backlash threatened the domestic and international markets for Canadian pork and with public awareness intensifying in Canada, Ontario Pork decided to remove its support.

The GM pig is an example of how genetic engineering is applied to solve problems that already have one or more solutions. There have always been many solutions to the problem of excessive waste from large hog farms. In addition to structural changes, there is the simple technological fix of a feed supplement that does exactly what the so-called “Enviro-pig” promised to do. The hog feed supplement (phytase) has increased in effectiveness over the years and is cost-neutral for farmers. Manitoba hog producers are using the supplement and manure management practices to meet new provincial phosphorus pollution regulations.

The University of Guelph never had a public mandate to bring the GM pig to market. Yet even in the face of deep social conflict over GM food animals and dubious commercial prospects, public funds were used to develop the GM pig and support the goal of commercialization.



Additionally, public resources at Health Canada were spent reviewing the safety of this GM animal that no one wanted. In fact, the university has yet to officially withdraw its requests for approval from Health Canada and the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

When the university decided to seek commercial interest in the GM pig, it stepped outside the traditional boundaries of university research

and became a commercial actor in the biotech industry. The university became engaged in the global social conflict over genetic engineering. It also became party to secret decision-making about GM foods in Canada. By requesting approval from Health Canada, the university became a participant in our secret regulatory system. When the university asked Canadian regulators to assess the safety of the GM pig, it accepted a system that classified its data as “Confidential Business Information” and rather than releasing this information to the public, the university accepted this secrecy as legitimate.

The hard reality now is the 16 GM pigs housed at the university need to be euthanized and incinerated under

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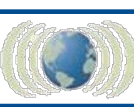
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careful biosafety procedures. This is a necessary step to ensure the end of “Enviro-pig.” The university will send the genetics for storage and as “sole owner and researcher,” it says it will “continue to have the responsibility to make appropriate decisions regarding future use of the technology.” This means the genes will stay on



When the university decided to seek commercial interest in the GM pig, it stepped outside the traditional boundaries of university research and became a commercial actor in the biotech industry.

the shelf at a federal government facility in Saskatoon until the university decides otherwise. The Canadian Biotechnology Action Network is asking the university to withdraw its applications for approval from Health Canada and the US FDA in order to finally leave the GM pig at rest.

Despite the demise of “Enviro-pig,” the first GM food animal could still be introduced because the small US company AquaBounty is seeking approval for its fast-growing GM Atlantic salmon. All polls show consumers do not want GM fish and the aquaculture industry itself says there is no market for it. However, the lack of democracy in genetic engineering means unwanted GM experiments can still be approved.

GM animals are neither commercially viable nor socially acceptable and yet they may still be released into our food system because there is no public participation or debate. There is no gatekeeper between the University of Guelph or AquaBounty and Health Canada. At the moment, there is no public arbitrator to intervene to stop GM food animals. There is only public protest. Find out more at www.cban.ca

Lucy Sharratt is the coordinator for the Canadian Biotechnology Action Network (CBAN) www.cban.ca

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Briefing Notes on Prescription Drugs

Pregnant women beware

“Don’t worry, be happy” slogan could harm your baby

It’s springtime in Canada and with nature in full bloom, it’s timely to reflect on reproduction in all its forms.

If you’re in the drug manufacturing business, your organization exists to produce profits. While we might criticize pharmaceutical companies for putting profits before public health, my sense is you can’t fault a company for seeking profits any more than you can fault a cat for chasing mice; it’s what they do.

But if you place the business of selling drugs beside the business of human reproduction – i.e. having babies – you witness some strange things. You discover, for example, that some drug companies and the spokespeople they fund don’t seem all that worried about women taking drugs while pregnant.

Midwives, obstetricians and doctors are typically very cautious when it comes to counselling their pregnant patients around prescription drugs. Yet they can’t avoid the savvy drug manufacturers that clearly don’t want to cut themselves off from the lucrative market represented by millions of pregnant or lactating women. Manufacturers serve shareholders; in fact, that’s the only constituency they must report to so they can’t ignore any segment of the market. However, exploiting the pregnancy market has many potential challenges.

For starters, it’s not as easy as it looks to convince pregnant women to take drugs; you have to overcome one of the strongest forces on the planet – a woman’s intuition, which seems finely tuned towards precaution and safety. Things that don’t ‘feel right’ – such as the suggestion to ingest powerful chemicals when you’ve got a baby inside you – are hard to suppress. Regardless of the assurances of some experts, many medical treatments, including prescription drugs, vitamins and alternative therapies, have never been properly tested in pregnant women. When faced with this dilemma, I think women trust their intuition, often guided by outside sources of information that seems credible.

Drug companies and their paid surrogates have to work awfully hard to seem credible to women. What makes it difficult is the lingering taint of past drug disasters – the ones that were catastrophic for many women and their babies. Drugs such as thalidomide or DES (diethylstilbestrol) were given to pregnant women with disastrous consequences and so downplaying those examples by claiming that we do things differently today seems a key strategy. Many suggest the world is much safer now and that modern drug regulatory systems are ensuring those disasters could never happen again.

I interrupt this column to bring you a public service message: “Anyone want to buy a bridge?” Now, where was I?

The most infamous example is the thalidomide disaster of the sixties, which stemmed from a drug given to pregnant women to treat morning sickness. Thalidomide resulted in thousands of children being born with deformed limbs and digits. One would expect that images of “flipper babies” would be seared into our public consciousness, putting a halt to treating pregnant women with pharmaceuticals. Yet that disaster, however stark in its imagery, had a sister: DES was a synthetic estrogen prescribed to millions of pregnant women for nearly 30 years, causing cancers of the vagina and cervix in the daughters of women who took DES during pregnancy (among other things).

If you are pregnant and concerned about prescription drugs, where can you find good information? According to a recent article in *Glow*, a slick Canadian fashion magazine, the major source of information for Canadian mothers-to-be is the Motherisk program in Toronto – www.motherisk.org – which was created to “give women and health professionals accurate and reliable information.”

According to the Motherisk website, the group actively “reviews data from

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around the world and conducts studies to determine the risks of drugs during pregnancy.” They conclude “it is now clear that there are many drugs that are safe for use in pregnancy.” I seriously wondered about that – my intuition was telling me something different – so I decided to look closely at what Motherisk said about one major drug class used in pregnancy: antidepressants.

Their information says that some research “described a poor neonatal adaptation syndrome in newborns whose mothers had been taking tricyclic, SSRI or SNRI antidepressants near term,” adding that “the most common adverse effects associated with this syndrome are transient, mostly self-limiting, jitteriness; grasping muscle weakness; and respiratory difficulties that sometimes require use of a ventilator.” The suggestion is that these difficulties pale in comparison to the risk of the mother and fetus if the mother’s depression isn’t treated.

What is odd is that the Motherisk program fails to mention other major dangers found by independent research groups that have done fairly exhaustive research on the issue. The Therapeutics Initiative at UBC – which takes no drug company money – reports an extensive analysis of six studies of antidepressants in pregnancy and found “SSRI use was associated with more spontaneous abortions.” (See their newsletter at <http://www.ti.ubc.ca/letter76>)

Lejla Halilovic is a women’s health activist in Toronto and she has a number of problems with Motherisk’s information. Her biggest concern, besides feeling the information they provide women is outdated, is that Motherisk fails to point out specific drug safety advisories issued by regulators. She says “it’s outrageous that one of Canada’s biggest resources for pregnant women lacks Health Canada warnings,” such as the one warning of (Paxil) paroxetine’s risk posted in December 2005.

The UBC folks conclude that, based on a meta-analysis of 14 observational studies, paroxetine may cause as many as one in 200 women to have a baby with heart problems. Does Motherisk mention “cardiac malformations?” It’s not there. Well, what about other SSRIs, like Prozac (fluoxetine) or Zoloft (sertraline)? Do they have the same kind of risk? UBC research found an eight-year follow-up study of all births in Denmark, where women had filled at least two prescriptions for SSRIs while pregnant. Those women had a one in 246 chance of having a child with a heart defect.

Motherisk also fails to mention SSRIs can cause persistent pulmonary hypertension of the newborn (PPHN), in about one per 1,000 live births and can be potentially fatal.

So let me recap: a major agency in Canada that alleges to inform women of the safety of drugs in pregnancy doesn’t mention major Health Canada safety warnings and fails to note that miscarriages, cardiac effects and other rare, but potentially fatal, dangers are associated with taking antidepressants while pregnant. I’m scratching my head; why would they leave such important stuff out?

Please don’t say they are pharma flacks.

Lejla Halilovic reminds me that Motherisk is staffed by very good and committed people but, alas, with any drug source you need to know who is paying the bills. A quick tour of the Motherisk site explains the website service is sponsored by a drug company (Duchesnay), a drug store (Shopper’s Drug Mart) and a foundation (Sick Kids Foundation), which itself takes money from most major drug companies.

Of all the information on the Motherisk website, the disclaimer is probably the most honest. It notes, “We do not guarantee or warrant the quality, accuracy, completeness, timeliness, appropriateness or suitability of the information provided,” adding, “you assume full responsibility for the use of the information.”

Amen to that.

Pregnant and told to take pharmaceuticals? Perhaps you can start by avoiding sources that are obviously drug-tainted. Remind yourself that thalidomide and DES were huge disasters, partly due to the biased information given to women.

Again and again, we need to be reminded that information, which is clearly being funded by an industry that lives to chase down and capture new customers, as the cat chases mice, cannot be acting in the best interests of patients.

This is especially worth remembering next time someone is trying to override your intuition with a “don’t worry, be happy” message around drugs in pregnancy. 

Alan Cassels is a drug policy researcher at the University of Victoria and the author of the just-launched **Seeking Sickness: Medical Screening and the Misguided Hunt for Disease**.



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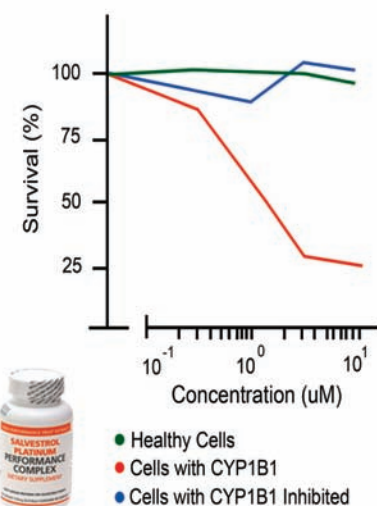


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Smart meter's top-down agenda

In the technetronic society, the trend seems to be toward aggregating the individual support of millions of unorganized citizens, who are easily within the reach of magnetic and attractive personalities, and effectively exploiting the latest communication techniques to manipulate emotions and control reason. — Zbigniew Brzezinski, Between Two Ages: America's Role in the Technetronic Era (1970).

When Barack Obama was just a toddler, Zbigniew Brzezinski was envisioning the day of making just such a technetronic “smart” society.

Fast-forward to 2012 and what we’re seeing is a so-called “smart” grid being forced upon an unwilling, but awakening population. This issue is unfolding with great grassroots notoriety here, as part of BC Hydro’s “smart metering” program, and unfurled simultaneously around the world.

If the people of BC and around the world allow the installation of the smart grid, democracy will fall. Tens of thousands of people in BC alone, and millions globally, are waking up to the deceit of this global agenda.

BC Hydro has recently recalled 1,000 smart meters due to their not functioning. Hundreds of thousands of BC citizens have now received Hydro bills anywhere from 30 to 1000 percent higher, following smart meter installation – increases with no real justification. It now appears possible that none of these meters measure accurately. One scenario will be a complete recall of smart meters across the province, if public outcry continues to grow.

According to BC Hydro’s figures, our cost of each smart meter in BC is approximately \$555. In Quebec, where citizens now officially have a free opt-out option, the cost is \$263.16 – less than half our amount. In Ontario, it is \$232.56. In many US states, the cost is less than \$200 per meter, including in Idaho, where no meters transmit wirelessly.

BC hydro awarded a multi-million dollar contract for smart meter installation to US multi-national giant Corix. David Emerson joined CAI (private equity) in 2008 as a senior advisor, with Corix in its “portfolio.” This is the same David Emerson who defected in 2006 to Stephen Harper’s government from the Liberals (previously Minister of Foreign Affairs) to become Minister of International Trade. Follow the dots. Would this be a conflict of interest? Emerson was executive chair of BC Transmissions Corp, chair of the BC premier’s advisory council, co-chair of the Alberta premier’s council, co-chair of the prime minister’s advisory committee. In the BC government, Emerson was the Deputy Minister of Finance, Deputy Minister to the Premier, and President of the British Columbia Trade Development Corporation. Emerson privately was CEO of Canfor Corporation, CEO of Vancouver International Airport Authority and Chairman of Canadian Western Bank. He is either extremely talented or well appointed.

In March’s *Wired* magazine, current CIA director David Patraeus admitted governments plan to spy on citizens through their “smart” appliances and we’ll be

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OPT-OUT OF SMART METERS IN 5 MINUTES:

Letter Templates: ThePowerFilm.org/taking-action or CitizensForSafeTechnology.org

forced to re-think “our notions of identity and secrecy... Items of interest will be located, identified, monitored, and remotely controlled through technologies such as radio-frequency identification, sensor networks, tiny embedded servers, and energy harvesters – all connected to the next-generation internet using abundant, low-cost and high-power computing.”

Via the US Freedom of Information Act, researcher Angel De Fazio obtained documentation showing a \$298 million grant for smart meter deployment in Nevada. One funding source was the “US Armed Forces Research and Development Projects.” The US has acknowledged its research programs around microwave radio frequency radiation and its effects on the human body and mind.

In a California lawsuit, Pacific Gas & Electric had to supply information on how frequently each smart meter transmits wirelessly. The average meter pulses 14,000 times per day, each for 4.5 milliseconds – every six seconds. Some meters pulse up to 190,000 times per day, or twice per second. Utility companies are fond of using a cumulative total (i.e. “60 seconds per day”) rather than admitting the constant emissions. These totals do not include the emissions from each wireless “smart” appliance the grid will require of us in the future, creating a veritable soup of electromagnetic radiation that the WHO calls a “class 2B potential carcinogen.”

Health concerns have led the American Academy of Environmental Medicine and the Austrian Medical Association to publicly call the immediate ban of the smart metering program.

Most smart meters in BC are not yet actively transmitting; most meters are still being read manually, which means we still have time to recall the entire smart metering program in BC.

BC Hydro has stated, “We will not force you to have a smart meter.” However, it has failed to inform us we have a choice. An estimated 30,000 British Columbians have, on their own accord, notified Hydro of their non-consent (though Hydro’s public figures may still be lower) and installation has been delayed for most. Mail BC Hydro your letter of non-consent. See the templates at CitizensForSafeTechnology.org. If a smart meter has already been forced on you, you can demand to have it replaced. <

For more information, see Take Back Your Power, www.ThePowerFilm.org

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Nutrition Through the Lifespan

Allergies: Prevention & Treatment through Nutrition

With Jason Marr ND

View Lecture Descriptions at

www.instituteofholisticnutrition.com





Spring cleaning for your body

Spring has finally sprung. It's a time that inspires spring cleaning so why not put some pep in your step and cleanse and detoxify your body? Here are some good plants to help you do this:

Milk thistle (*Silybum marianum*) has been used for 2,000 years as a herbal remedy for a variety of ailments, particularly liver, kidney and gall bladder problems. Scientific studies suggest that a flavonoid in milk thistle seeds, called silymarin, protects the liver from toxins, including certain drugs such as acetaminophen (Tylenol), which, in high doses, causes liver damage. Silymarin has anti-oxidant and anti-inflammatory properties and may help the liver repair itself by growing new cells.

Wheatgrass: If you can get used to the sickly-sweet taste of chlorophyll, drinking wheatgrass (or barley) juice offers many benefits. The juice made from barley and wheat grass is 70 percent chlorophyll and rich in vitamins and minerals. It has been shown to lower the presence of heavy metals in children. Barley and wheatgrass juice is rich in live enzymes known to inhibit carcinogens and retard bacterial growth in the body. Buy organic hard wheat berries for sprouting grass.

Nettles: Stinging nettles (*Urtica dioica*) contain vitamins C, B2 and K as well as beta-carotene, calcium, magnesium, iron and silica. Because they are rich in iron and minerals they help fight anemia, fatigue, exhaustion and other effects of stress. A meal of nettles provides a perfect spring tonic. (I saw a \$2 bag of nettles for sale in a health food store last week).

Dandelion: In Europe, dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*) is respected as a nutritional and medicinal powerhouse; dandelion greens are added to salads and used as lettuce and dandelion root is highly regarded as a tonic to detoxify the liver. The roasted roots are used in coffee substitutes and the flowers are used to make dandelion wine. Dandelion root promotes digestion, providing an excellent boost for the absorption of nutritional vitamin and mineral supplements. Dandelion root also provides vitamins A and C and B-complex vitamins, important for heart health, as well as zinc, iron and potassium, which means it is often used as a treatment for anemia.

Cilantro is a chelating agent that removes heavy metals such as mercury, aluminum and lead, stored in fat cells in our bodies. I love the taste of this herb cut fresh from the garden; a 10-foot row provides plenty of cut-and-come-again leaves year-round. Cilantro is added to salsas, salads, curry and pasta dishes, panini and Mexican cooking; it also makes wonderful pesto. ☞

Carolyn Herriot is author of **The Zero-Mile Diet: a Year-Round Guide to Growing Organic Food**. She is currently writing **The Zero-Mile Diet Cookbook** (fall 2012 release, Harbour Publishing). <http://earthfuture.com/gardenpath/>

Nettle soup Serves 6

4 cups (1 litre) tender, young nettle tops	1 litre (1 qt) vegetable stock (or stock cube)
2 tbsp. (30 ml) butter	1 tsp. (5 ml) sea salt
1 onion, chopped	1 tsp. (5 ml) freshly ground pepper
2 large garlic cloves, minced	6 tbsp. (90 ml) plain yoghurt
1 large or 2 smaller leeks, thinly sliced	Garnish: Chopped chives
2 celery stalks, chopped fine	

Handling with tongs, discard any tough stalks and wash the nettles in a large basin of cold water. Melt the butter; add the onion and garlic and then stir in the leek and celery. Cover and sweat gently for 10 minutes, stirring regularly. Add the vegetable stock, stir in the nettles and simmer for 10 minutes, until the nettles are wilted (no more stinging!) Season with salt and pepper to taste. Purée the soup in a blender until smooth. Serve topped with yoghurt and snipped chives.

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Eating right for kickboxing

In the past few years, kickboxing has increased in popularity among both men and women. People participate to lose weight, gain muscle, increase fitness and have fun. Whatever your reasons, it is important to complement your training regime with proper and adequate nutrition.

Kickboxing is a high-intensity sport that requires a lot of energy and the main source of this energy is carbohydrates. Carbohydrates are stored in your muscles and liver as glycogen, which your body converts to energy during your workout. It is necessary to include plenty of quality carbohydrates in your diet, such as whole grains, fruits, vegetables and legumes to keep this energy store full. If you exclude carbohydrates from your diet, you won't burn fat while exercising; you'll just run out of energy.

It is a common misconception that when you work out, you need to increase your protein intake. While it is true that protein is needed to build and repair muscle, most people already exceed their daily protein needs through their regular diet. While animal products, beans and soy foods are well-recognized protein sources, grains, vegetables, seeds and nuts also contribute excellent protein.

Not only is *what* you eat important, but *when* you eat makes a difference. Eating too much just before your workout can make for an uncomfortable experience. Not eating enough can make it difficult to maintain energy throughout the session.

2-4 hours before your workout: Eat a meal that includes carbohydrate and protein. If your meal is closer to the two-hour mark, be sure it is fairly low in fat and fibre as these both slow the digestion of food and can cause a stomachache during your workout.

1 hour before your workout: If you are short on time, eat a *light* meal or snack one hour before your workout. Keep this meal low in fat and fibre and high in carbohydrates.

After your workout: The two hours after you exercise is when your muscles are

most efficient at replacing lost glycogen. Eat a snack or meal that includes carbohydrate and some protein. Below is a post-workout snack with about a third of your daily protein requirement. [K](#)

Vesanto Melina is a registered dietitian and author based in Langley. She is currently involved with the new project www.vancouvercohousing.com.

Deanna Ibbitson is an assistant instructor at Westside Kickboxing with a master's degree in nutrition. She helps Vesanto with nutrition research <http://dinutrition.com>

Banana Blueberry Power Drink

Makes 2 1/2 cups, 1 or 2 servings

From *Cooking Vegetarian* by J. Forest and V Melina (Wiley Canada, 2011)

The seeds and fruit in this smoothie provide abundant carbohydrate, protein, minerals, vitamin E and omega 3 fatty acids. For one person, it is a power-packed breakfast that can take you through the morning; others might divide it into two servings. Pre-soaking the seeds and dates increases mineral availability as well as the smoothness of the final product, though the smoothie is fine without this step.

1/4 cup sunflower seeds	1 1/4 cups water	1 cup blueberries
3 pitted dates	1 banana	1/4 cup shelled hemp seeds

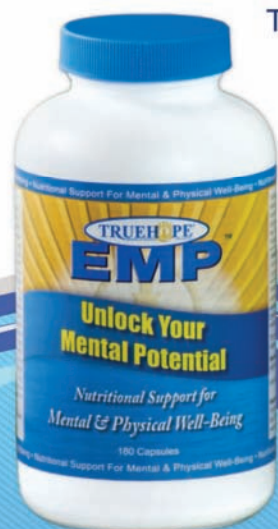
In a small bowl, soak the sunflower seeds and dates in the water for six hours or overnight (optional). Place the seeds, dates, their soaking liquid, the banana, blueberries and hemp seeds into a blender; blend on high speed until smooth. If a thinner consistency is desired, add a little more water.

Full recipe: Calories: 584. Protein: 18 g. Dietary fibre: 21 g. Calcium: 85 mg. Iron: 5 mg.

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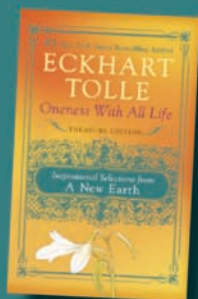
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... **Food Fight** from p.6

Orange, carcinogenic food additives, PCBs, and now global warming – to dictate their food choices.

Why has it taken so long to get this far? How have Monsanto and its cohorts been able to grow and maintain market supremacy while force-feeding unlabeled “Frankenfoods” to the public for decades? By buying off politicians, bullying farmers and scientists, and keeping consumers in the dark.

Monsanto has sued over 150 farmers across the US and Canada (see Percy Schmeiser vs Monsanto, January 2004, Common Ground) and threatened thousands of others, for refusing to pay for “intellectual property theft” after their fields were contaminated by Monsanto’s patented genetically engineered crops.

The company has harassed and used the media to bully scientists who have exposed the public health and environmental hazards of genetically engineered foods and crops in the United States, Canada, Latin America, and Europe. The renowned scientist Dr. Arpad Pusztai from the UK, was pressured and discredited for reporting on the dangers of genetic engineering until he was eventually fired from his job. The same thing happened to the UK’s Environmental Minister, Michael Meacher.

In a number of other cases, scientists such as Ignacio Chapela, have received death threats. Chapela also said he received death threats to his children from “a high government official” in Mexico after he showed contamination of native corn with Monsanto’s GMOs. Other scientists, most notably Andres Carrasco from Argentina, have been assaulted by thugs. Monsanto has even hired the notorious Blackwater mercenaries to spy on its opponents worldwide.

Why has Monsanto gone to such great lengths to thwart GMO labeling laws and initiatives? Because it understands the threat that truth-in-labeling poses for GMOs – and biotech industry profits. As soon as genetically engineered foods are labeled in the U.S., millions of consumers will read these labels and react. They’ll complain to grocery store managers and companies, they’ll talk to their family and friends. They’ll switch to foods that are organic or at least GMO-free. Once enough consumers complain about GE foods and food ingredients, stores will eventually stop selling them. Farmers will stop planting them.

In Europe, there are almost no genetically engineered crops, while here nearly 75% of all supermarket foods are GE-tainted. Why? Because Europe requires labeling of genetically engineered foods – and the US does not.

This is exactly why activists have launched the California Ballot Initiative. Passing mandatory GMO food labeling in just one large state, California, the eighth largest economy in the world, where there is tremendous opposition to GE foods as well as a multi-billion dollar organic food industry, will ultimately have the same impact as a national labeling law.

Once food manufacturers and supermarkets are forced to come clean and label genetically engineered products, they will likely remove all GE ingredients, to avoid the “skull and crossbones” effect, just like the food industry in the EU has done. In the wake of this development American farmers will convert millions of acres of GE crops to non-GMO or organic varieties.

Monsanto, the Farm Bureau, and the Grocery Manufacturers Association – under the guise of its front group, the so-called Coalition Against the Costly Food Law - are building up a massive war chest up to battle the California Ballot Initiative. They will literally spend millions to spread lies and disinformation that GMO foods and crops are perfectly safe - and that we need more, not less GMO food and biofuel crops in this era of climate change and growing population.

They will lie and say that GMO labels will be costly to the food industry and raise food prices. They will say that it is the job of the FDA to decide whether GMOs are labeled, not the states. Yet we already know that this battle will never be won in Washington DC, where Monsanto and Food Inc. lobbyists have politicians in their back pockets. It will only be won in places like California (or Vermont), vital centers of organic food and farming and anti-GMO sentiment, where 90% of the body politic, according to recent polls, support mandatory labeling.

It’s time to take back control over our food and farming system. It’s time to stand up to Monsanto and the Biotech Bullies. ◀

Ronnie Cummins founded the Organic Consumers Association and wrote **Genetically Engineered Food: A Self-Defense Guide for Consumers**. You can help by contacting www.organicconsumersfund.org

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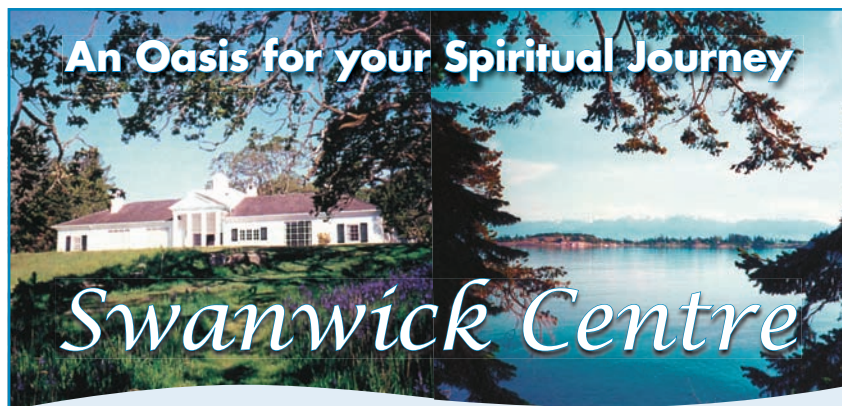
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LIFE'S ACTIVITIES intensify dynamically and dramatically around full Moon time. The effects of the full Moon can be felt two days before and two days after its actual date. The full Moon on May 5 will bring things sharply into perspective. Mercury and Saturn form an opposition just a couple of hours before the full Moon, bringing some type of serious situation to light. Mercury/Saturn oppositions speak of delay and breakdowns regarding communications, misunderstandings and negotiations. Conflicted emotions such as jealousy, rage, anger and envy arise, especially with a Scorpio full Moon. It should be a hot night in the clubs, as the spring mating ritual takes hold. Venus rules this full Moon and she is moving very slowly throughout the month. Venus forms a triangle with Saturn, which helps to bring balance and harmony. My hint for the best possible behaviour in this highly charged time is to keep your cards close to the vest; say less, if anything at all. Mainly, live by the creed that martial artist Chuck Norris devised. He said the best defence is not to offend.

We have a solar eclipse on May 20 in the first degree of Gemini, which is the sign of communication and commerce. Mercury, lord of Gemini, is sitting close to Jupiter, which is an excellent indicator of possible agreements, positive negotiations, trust and coopera-



ARIES Mar 21 - Apr 19

It's time to put it all together. Stay original and go for what you want. Even if you don't get what you want, you most likely will end up in unique and interesting circumstances. The full Moon on May 5 illuminates the road ahead.



TAURUS Apr 20 - May 21

What Taurus wants, Taurus gets. Watch for what you want, as you will probably get it. The full Moon on May 5 will bring revelations. May 21 and 22 are opportune days to connect and communicate. Heart-to-heart talks may move mountains.



GEMINI May 22 - Jun 20

The Gemini solar eclipse on May 20 indicates a new start. Do some soul searching. Love, values, family and career objectives get a makeover. Life heats up as the Spring progresses. The summer is even better, as travel and fun times are indicated.



CANCER Jun 21 - Jul 22

Most Cancer people are a bit wide-eyed and wild-eyed during the full Moon phase. Sleepless nights and creative flights, fuelled by a vivid imagination have you pacing the floor on May 5. Decisions are made that allow you to move forward.



LEO Jul 23 - Aug 22

Career and home sectors are affected by the full Moon on May 5. News from afar may change your course in some way. With any serious effort, you can attain your objectives. It is your time to shine. Stay open, original and flexible.



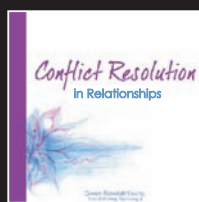
VIRGO Aug 23 - Sep 22

A busy month unfolds. You're in demand and possibly in command. Travel, education and spirituality can attract you now. It is a time of wielding influence and power. Lucky breaks and good news arrive on May 21 and 22. Move forward with confidence.

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tion. We have an opportunity to explore productive and reasonable solutions to our problems. Venus and Saturn are in a powerful triangle and whatever seeds we plant at the time of this eclipse will bear positive fruit for several months to come. On another level, the solar eclipse falls right onto a very sensitive point in Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's horoscope and the eclipse has a strong effect on the chart of Benjamin Netanyahu as well.

The eclipse could herald the start of a serious re-ignition or continuation of very old karma. It seems it is the way of the world in the Kali Yuga. If there is a blessing for the times, it will be in the form of the softening and rendering of the hearts of men, once we have dined long enough on the steady diet of war and violence or the threat of it; certainly, it is what we have known since recorded history. It is not doomsday although it sounds that way. It's a new day and a new way that will get us through to the next chapter in the eternal book of life. The outer planets Uranus, Neptune and Pluto are having a major effect. Uranus transits Aries until 2018, shaking everything up and bringing a most rebellious time of it, planetary-wise. New inroads and new ways and means of living will develop, as anything that has outlived its useful purpose will most likely meet its demise or, at the least, experience a new birth. Neptune visits his own sign Pisces for the next 14 years, bringing us into a time in which we will seek a deeper meaning and a deeper value to our existence. <



LIBRA Sep 23 - Oct 22

Your ruling planet Venus forms a triangle with Saturn that lasts throughout the month. While Saturn is the stern taskmaster bringing sobering realities, Venus is about wisdom, beauty, grace and love. The combination restores balance and harmony and brings peace and happiness.

SCORPIO Oct 23 - Nov 21



The Scorpio full Moon on May 5 brings important revelations. It's a time of deep reflection and introspection. Jupiter and Mars cast good energy, bringing confidence and strength. It is also a time of rest and repair. Relationships get a boost May 21 and 22.



SAGITTARIUS Nov 22 - Dec 21

You are known to be lucky and luck favours those that are prepared, organized and together. The full Moon on May 5 helps you to see which areas need attention and care, such as health and work demands. A good summer approaches.



CAPRICORN Dec 22 - Jan 19

The Sun and Jupiter cast good energy your way as they light up your solar fifth house. This house rules over topics such as children, creativity, romance, gambling, business and entertainment. It is also a good karma house. Make good use of your time.



AQUARIUS Jan 20 - Feb 19

Home and career sectors are stimulated by the full Moon on May 5. If you want to make important changes, wait until the end of the month, as the picture brightens sharply and your opportunities will increase. Creative energy flows abundantly then.



PISCES Feb 20 - Mar 20

Moves, renovations, family obligations and other machinations keep you hopping throughout the month. Creative energy is high and you might need it in order to manoeuvre through the thorny issues that are at hand. Kindness, caring and consideration are the Pisces way.

Mac McLaughlin has been a practising, professional astrologer for more than four decades. His popular **Straight Stars** column ran in Vancouver's largest weekly newspaper for 11 years. Email mac@macsstars.com or call 604-731-1109





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Making miracles



It's becoming increasingly clear that the universe isn't simply an assembly of separate particles, planets and entities in set, predictable relationships to one another. Instead, we're finding that all the pieces making up our physical world are dynamic, interrelated and able to affect and be affected by one another. It's impossible, even, to separate ourselves from the whole sufficiently to observe it without our very observations having an impact.

These new truths, by their very nature, must radically reshape how we perceive ourselves and our relationships to one another and how we live day to day and relate to the world around us. Taken out of the realm of science and applied to daily life, these new laws of physics suggest a reality in which we have far more power to influence our environment than we've previously known. Our very thoughts have the power to affect the physical world and movement at the physical level can happen instantaneously, through a "leap" in time and space rather than a linear, mechanical process. The only limitations are the ones we impose on ourselves with our fixed beliefs and assumptions about life.

Addictions are born when we believe we can't have that alive and pleasurable moment without the external catalyst, be it more of our beloved or more dessert. Addictions are all about more. When we think of what we're addicted to, we feel empty and crave more. When we think about what we love, we feel full.

The more we cultivate these moments of love, the more we amplify good in our lives. I know a woman who helped herself recover from a serious bout of illness by looking at pictures of baby animals every day simply because they triggered for her this powerfully healing experience of love. Dean Ornish, M.D., in his excellent book *Love and Survival*, pulled together decades of medical research documenting the connection between physical healing and all different forms of love, whether from the impersonal touch of a nurse taking blood pressure, interactions with friends and community or the experience of stroking a pet. He concludes that "love and intimacy are among the most powerful factors in health and illness." Quite simply, every time we experience even an instant of unconditional love, inner peace, compassion and forgiveness, we're in a powerful healing state.

If it was difficult to find anything in your memories that could fill you simply at the thought – which can happen when we're feeling at a low point in life or if we've had a long history of depression or disappointment – the way into these moments of fullness is through imagination. When we feel empty, we tend to use our imagination

to envision and amplify everything we lack. Imagination is such a powerfully creative tool that when we use it in the service of emptiness, we dig ourselves into a deeper hole of scarcity. But imagination can also take us to wonderful places that life experience hasn't.

Putting imagination to work in the service of love means not just envisioning the circumstances we want to happen, but cultivating the inner experiences we want in life. Too much emphasis on envisioning outcomes can amplify attachment, leaving us more concerned about the future than feeling content in the present. The inner experiences that fill us up in the moment, however, connect us to the Field and attract the outcomes that match the joy we've created within (often better outcomes than we could imagine).

If we want to experience the kind of mastery that enhances quality of life, we need to look, not just at our power to manifest occasional, lovely coincidences, but also at our responsibility for the unlovely coincidences of life that we call "circumstances beyond our control." Our power to affect the world around us through our conscious intent expands in direct correlation with our willingness to recognize the connection between our inner state and outer reality, barring nothing, the pleasant and the unpleasant.

While many will accept this concept of self-responsibility to a point, the notion of absolute self-responsibility tends to be unpopular and choosing not to accept it doesn't mean we'll never experience success or hap-

piness. It simply means we won't have as much access to the magical coincidences that cut corners and make life easier. So this principle is for those who are very serious about making a "quantum leap," as opposed to simply making progress, and there's no right or wrong choice around this. We all have a pace and a path that's right for us.

When I speak on the principle of self-responsibility to groups, the argument invariably comes up that there will always be things that we can't control, that we can't help, that have nothing to do with us. Many offer examples of things that, from the Newtonian paradigm of separateness and randomness, certainly appear out of anyone's control to affect. However, if we shift into the quantum model of connectedness, how can any piece of the whole not affect all of the whole?

It's not that the argument against absolute self-responsibility is wrong. It's that, as physics is demonstrating, seemingly mutually exclusive realities can both be true. The phenomenon of two seemingly incompatible

realities coexisting has a name: the Principle of Complementarity. The Principle was first formulated by physicist Niels Bohr, an early pioneer of atomic physics. Fred Alan Wolf writes about this phenomenon in his book *Taking the Quantum Leap*, saying Complementarity "taught us that our everyday senses were not to be trusted to give a total view of reality. There was always a hidden, complementary side to everything we experienced." Furthermore, he writes, "The more we determine one side of reality, the less the other, equally true side is shown to us." In other words, the more we focus on one perspective of reality and hold it to be the only truth, the less we're able to see other perspectives. This is why flexible thinking and unlearning everything we think we know for certain is such a crucial ingredient in miracle making.

Miracles happen in natural accordance with spiritual law. If we want miracle-making principles to work for us consistently, we need to be willing to work with them as absolutes. If we hold that we sometimes have the power to determine our reality but not always, where then do we draw the line? How do we decide when spiritual law is in effect and when it's not? Ultimately, the more we hold that we only sometimes have the power to be miracle-makers, the more we'll live a life filled with unpleasant circumstances outside our control.

The resistance that comes up around this principle is understandable. Absolute self-responsibility is an idea the ego can so easily run away with, and then, when

things go well, we become obnoxiously full of ourselves. We feel a little better than everyone else, a little more evolved. Taken to extreme, this becomes delusional “magical thinking” and a sign of deteriorating mental health. The flip side of this coin is that when things don’t go according to our wishes, we beat ourselves up and resolve to become better control freaks dedicated to eating right, thinking right, talking right, breathing right, and more, believing that if we control our every waking act we’ll never again have an unpleasant experience.

The ego, as I’m using the term, is the part of us that believes we are defined by the limits of our physical body and, thus, are vulnerable and separate. The ego looks at the world through a filter of judgment in which everything is either better than or lesser than everything else. It is “particle” consciousness rather than “wave” consciousness. When the ego embraces this principle of self-responsibility, it becomes abusive and much abused. Consequently, it’s crucial to understand and head off the pitfalls of this very powerful principle or it will be more detrimental than helpful.

Blame, shame and self-responsibility

Before the principle of self-responsibility can be useful, it has to be unravelled from the whole paradigm of blame and shame. The more we bristle at the idea of self-responsibility, the more likely it is that we were taught at an early age to feel shame. Blame and shame go hand



Putting imagination to work in the service of love means not just envisioning the circumstances we want to happen, but cultivating the inner experiences we want in life.

in hand, one giving rise to the other. They both have to do with finding fault, pointing a finger of judgment and defining something or someone as “wrong.” For those of us who’ve been taught to feel shame, it’s unbearable to let go of blame because then all the energy that had been going into blaming external forces for what’s wrong has nowhere to go except toward ourselves. Then we swing from feeling victimized by external circumstances to shaming and victimizing ourselves. While the experience of being an out-of-control victim is certainly not pleasant, at least it allows us to feel innocent rather than shamed and to feel justified in being angry at our circumstances.

Self-responsibility can be a crushing burden when carried this way. For example, many have applied the idea of self-responsibility to physical illness in a way that assumes an ill person has done something terribly wrong to create his or her disease. Others hold a perspective that they are somehow less spiritually evolved if the outer circumstances of their lives don’t reflect joy, abundance and health all the time.

The catch in this way of thinking is that our conscious

control only affects those aspects of self that are within the range of conscious awareness. Painful and unexpected challenges are often the catalysts that heighten our awareness of limiting beliefs and patterns that have been operating at an unconscious level. Most of us have an assortment of conscious and unconscious, sometimes conflicting, agendas all operating to create our experience in life. An example of conflicting agendas would be a person who very much wants to heal from an illness yet receives so much benefit from the rest and caring attention resulting from the illness that an unconscious investment is made in maintaining whatever circumstances are needed (such as the illness) to keep these rewards coming. Another example would be a person who longs to be in a relationship yet unconsciously fears that an intimate partnership would mean the loss of personal freedom or would lead to painful abandonment.

When these secondary, but powerful, agendas are present, we often have the experience of spinning wheels. Even though we direct a lot of effort toward our conscious desire, we don’t seem to make any progress. And we won’t make progress—until the less conscious agenda is somehow addressed or released. It’s often through the challenging experiences in life that we have an opportunity to recognize and change these hidden agendas so we can stop being at cross-purposes with ourselves.

Blame and shame are disempowering, often immobilizing, emotions that keep us unconscious and don’t motivate us to be better people. They need to be tossed out altogether for the work we’re doing here. Shifting from blame and shame to self-responsibility means looking at what you don’t like about your life, not as something you did wrong (shame), or as something done to you by circumstances beyond your control (blame), but with the question, “How does this situation show what I’ve learned to expect from life?”

Take, for example, the experience of being a victim of violent crime or abuse of any sort: the distortion of self-responsibility would be to assume “I must have done something to deserve or ask for it.” The more positive application is to examine how you’ve been trained to expect danger or abuse as part of life. How have your previous life experiences taught you that you’re not safe? The opportunity here is to learn compassion for yourself, experience forgiveness for another and begin to develop a deeper understanding of your own safety that will ultimately keep you safer physically. As a counsellor many years ago, I noticed that my women clients who had been raped had almost all been subjected to sexual or physical abuse as children. They learned early in life to expect to be harmed. No one had ever taught them that they had a right to be safe. These painful beliefs about life can even be evolved in very productive ways: we can learn to protect ourselves, we can advocate for victims, we can fight victimizers and we can develop our strength. These are all very useful and helpful things. They simply aren’t the same as learning to be safe.

Finding the hidden gains

Self-responsibility means asking yourself what value a painful situation might hold and how it serves you. If you look closely enough, there’s invariably a gain. For instance, sometimes we fill up our lives with energy-

draining obstacles because on some level we’re not ready for what we think we’d rather be doing. If we never have time or opportunity to pursue our dreams, we never have an opportunity to fail. Or if we’re constantly a victim of circumstances beyond our control, we can ask for people’s support and empathy and have less expected of us than if we had not fallen upon “hard luck.” There are hidden gains in even the most unpleasant life experiences.

The power in self-responsibility is that once we start seeing our own contributions to our circumstances, we can change them. If the world is treating you badly, look to see how this could be a reflection of how you treat yourself. Are you self-critical? Do you put everyone else’s needs before your own? Do you get so caught up in doing what’s expected of you and what you think you should do that you have no time left to explore what you want to do? These are just a few ways we may manifest our lack of self-love and acceptance.

Another frequent argument made against self-responsibility is that God creates our reality—we don’t. The essence of self-responsibility is neither about putting our will before God’s or putting God’s will above our own. Ultimately, it’s a call to heal our perceived separateness from God so there is only One Will. This, of course, means quieting the fears and grandiosity of our ego’s voice. No small task, but definitely worth the effort.

Excerpted from **Making Miracles: Create New Realities for Your Life and Our World** by Lynn Woodland, Namaste Publishing.

May is Making Miracles Month

Namaste Publishing and Banyen Books have joined together in a miracle-making experiment. In their joint initiative to financially support Seva Canada, an international non-profit that prevents, treats and cures blindness in developing countries, they are challenging Vancouverites to see just how many “miracles of sight” can be co-created. During the month of May, partial proceeds from the sale of each copy of *Making Miracles: Create New Realities for Your Life and Our World* by Lynn Woodland (Namaste Publishing) will be donated to Seva Canada. In addition, this free e-zine is available to anyone and online participants are encouraged to create a miracle study group or use this forum to report and share miracles. www.namastepublishing.com/miracles

May 25, 7:30 pm “Miracle Experience”

Miracle making, magical stories and inspired song: a collaborative experience in consciousness, intention and love. With Lynn Woodland, author of *Making Miracles* and Constance Kellough, president of Namaste Publishing and author of *The Leap*. (See Datebook for more info.)

May 26, 10-5 pm “Miracle Making”

An experiential workshop with Lynn Woodland. This lively, interactive event is about consciousness, time, quantum science and God, all woven into an exciting, collaborative experiment. (See Datebook for more info.)



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Just now

an interview with Eckhart Tolle

To read Eckhart Tolle's latest column, please see the current print edition of Common Ground. For copyright reasons, we are authorized to publish this column in our print version only.

JR: In your new book, I feel like you're the modern equivalent of the explorers that came to the new world, but an explorer and documenter of consciousness, discovering a new world.

ET: Yes, discovering is the right word. It's not that you need to make a great effort to attain it or bring it about or acquire it. It's discovering it's already there in you – conscious awareness that's obscured, or partially obscured, in many people. It's a discovery of something already there.

It's like waking up after a dream, because identification with the thinking mind and its stories and the old emotional conditioning is like being immersed in a kind of dream world, which very often turns into a nightmare – acting out old conditioned patterns again and again. The whole structure of the egoic mind is an old dysfunction.

There's some evidence that the ego started about 6,000 years ago, but nobody can say for sure. Before that, humans were in a state of innocence. When we go beyond the dysfunction of the ego, we regain our original innocence, but on a much deeper level. This is why Jesus said unless we become as little children we cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.

So, returning to the original innocence, and at the same time going much deeper into that with full awareness – that's the process. We're coming out of thousands of years of dreadful suffering, almost the whole of recorded history of humanity. If you really look at it in an unbiased way, as if you'd never seen it before, one cannot but admit that, to a large extent, 80 to 90 percent of it is a history of pathological insanity, the suffering that humans have created for themselves and, of course, inflicting it upon others.

JR: And exporting it through colonization to the new world.

ET: Yes, so the important part of the awakening process is the realization of the insanity in human history, collectively, to this day playing itself out in world events. Also, to be aware of the insanity within oneself – old, dysfunctional patterns that come again and again that create suffering. So when you see that you're insane, then you're not completely insane. Sanity comes the moment you realize the fact of insanity. To see insanity is not a negative thing.

JR: At least you're out of denial.

ET: Yes, that's why in the film *A Beautiful Mind*, for example, which is about a mathematical genius who did have a mental dysfunction, his mind was developed in certain areas but he was also insane. The viewer of the film doesn't know that until a certain point when the character realizes that many of his experiences are delusions. At that moment, his healing begins. He's not cured yet, but his healing begins because he's recognized his own insanity. That recognition can only come out of sanity, which is the awareness of unconditioned consciousness.

JR: I remember you saying before you published your last book that the next one would be about why there isn't peace on this planet. Was finding a solution one of the major intentions of *A New Earth*?

ET: Yes, to see the nature of the major dysfunction. That's why I talk quite a bit about the ego in this book. We need to recognize the nature of the dysfunction. Sometimes, even very great Eastern teachers sometimes neglect that part because they're not really touched by the magnitude of, especially, the Western ego. So it's very important for us to see the dysfunction so that we can recognize it when it arises.

Part of the new book is about recognizing the ego, which I regard as a semi-autonomous energy. It's an energy field. Every thought you think is an energy field. It has a form and then it dissolves and then there is another form. The ego itself is an energy field and it has a collective and individual aspect. Every indi-

vidual ego is part of the collective. They're connected. Every individual is a manifestation of the collective. To recognize that is essential because the ego, being a very clever entity, has many ways of reappearing. Even if you've seen it in one disguise, it can suddenly reappear in a new one.

You might suddenly realize your whole sense of self, identity, is being derived from your possessions and social position. You see that your whole sense of identity is bound up with that and you recognize one aspect of ego. Well, usually it only comes to people when they suffer, when the identification with something no longer works...

It's recognizing the ego in its many disguises. I've met Buddhist monks who had enormous egos without knowing it. I remember being in a monastery afraid to approach them because they seemed so aloof. Yet I've met other Buddhist monks who were like little children and it was a joy to talk to them because they'd laugh and not take themselves seriously at all. They didn't take the whole Buddhist



Eckhart Tolle with *Common Ground* publisher Joseph Roberts.
Photo by Ishi Dinim.

thing seriously either, yet they practised it knowing it was only a form and they weren't identified with it.

There's a dimension in us that has nothing to do with content. Self-realization is that I am not that. I'm not my story, not my grievances and hang-ups, not the story of me that I'm telling other people at parties or repeating in my head again and again. That is only form. It's temporary.

When you see what you're not, it's already liberating. Something inside you breathes a sigh of relief. Then, of course, the mind begins to ask, "What are you if you are not that?" It wants an answer. In other words, it wants some new form. It wants a new thought. There must be a thought that I am. But it doesn't work like that. That's why the great book the Tao Te Ching starts with the line that the Tao that can be spoken of is not the true Tao because Tao – in the ancient Chinese way of putting it – is the formless dimension. You could say pure consciousness, but with any term we use we have to be careful it's not mistaken for "It." Otherwise, the mind comes in and says, "Oh, consciousness, yes. I believe that I'm consciousness." It's not another belief. It's finding that spaciousness inside yourself that's there when you let go of identification of form. 

Excerpted from **Just now: a two-part interview with Eckhart Tolle** by Joseph Roberts. Read the full interview online. Go to www.commonground.ca Click on archives. Click on 2007 at the top of the page. For part one, click on September 2007. For part two, click on October 2007.

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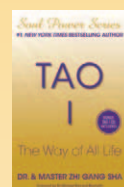
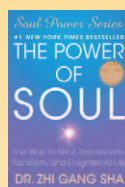
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A mustard seed miracle

The story of Namaste Publishing



and shared Presence. Eckhart was the bonfire of consciousness that drew our small, splintery flames into its centre. Life had brought me my *Sangha*.

As time passed, I learned that Eckhart was writing a book. While I thought this was a wonderful idea, I didn't give it a further thought. After a semi-private session with Eckhart that summer, he asked me, "Constance, would you consider being my publisher?"

On one level, I was astonished by Eckhart's request, but curiously, at another level, not at all surprised. I was happily ensconced in my career as a management consultant. True, for 10 years I had been in the college system as both an instructor and Department Chair of English Literature, but I knew absolutely nothing about publishing.

My ego jumped in: "Constance, you have never published a book before. What if you fail? What if you let Eckhart down? How are you going to find the time to do this, not to mention the money?"

As I drove home from Eckhart's that afternoon, I began to sense the possibility that behind the chronology of our meeting was the hand of an invisible weaver. If life had orchestrated our coming together at just the moment I was seeking a deeper and more communal form of spiritual practice, was it now orchestrating our partnering in this new work?

My drive from West Vancouver to Vancouver proper that day took me over the Lion's Gate Bridge. As I literally crossed this bridge, I also crossed an "inner bridge." Yes, I would be Eckhart's publisher.

The mustard seed had dropped into the soil.

As Eckhart and I sat together month by month during the writing of his yet-to-be-entitled book, we were in total oneness in feeling *compelled* to put it out into the world, with no regard as to whether 80, 800 or 800,000 people would read it.

The Power of Now was born into the world in 1997. But many tests of our commitment lay ahead. As first-time author and publisher, how could we defy many of the publishing industry norms and practices to create a breakthrough with this book?

With no marketing budget to speak of in those days of early germination, Eckhart and I often walked the books into stores ourselves. Sometimes we met with no interest and other times the store would order a few copies at a time. Then something wonderful happened – *The Power of Now* began to spread effortlessly through word of mouth.

It was evident there was a readership for this book. But to best cultivate and respond to it, we needed a vehicle for distribution. After two failed attempts to convince a Canadian national book distributor to carry *The Power of Now*, the third and final attempt met with success.

Fifteen years after its first printing, *The Power of Now* has sold almost seven million copies worldwide, is available in 47 languages and continues to find new readers

and catch the public eye. The delicious spiritual "back-story" is that this one book alone has significantly contributed to raising the consciousness of our entire planet.

Would Eckhart write another book? At all times, our publishing decisions were dictated by the hand of life's invisible weaver. The answer came as Eckhart's teaching evolved. *The Power of Now* was followed by *Stillness Speaks* and then *A New Earth*.

Led by the hand of life, other authors were published and much like Eckhart, they were not sought out; Life brought them to Namaste Publishing, along with a perfect mix of gifted, service driven staff.

Just as with *The Power of Now*, which ignited Namaste Publishing, all subsequent publications were and will continue to emanate from our intent to be of service to humanity by providing content born of the higher consciousness that is pressing to emerge on the planet at this time. This higher consciousness speaks of our true nature, our divine and inestimable worth captured in the word "Namaste." Namaste Publishing grew over the years through sub-licensing and co-publishing agreements, foreign rights sales and by finally procuring our own distribution throughout North America and the world.

Any person in business whose primary *raison d'être* is to be of service to their fellow man needs to have both feet on the ground at all times: one foot in the spiritual world, the other in the practical world. That's a given. The challenge is to remember which of the two you must always lean on. Then decisions are made quickly and with confidence.

Of course, one will be challenged along the way and it is usually just before life presents a new service challenge. Has egoic motivation crept in? Is heart energy still the fuel which drives actions? Are you up for the next round?

One can only move with humility because it is evident through experience that the "little me," as Eckhart Tolle calls it, does very little of the work. One's job in this business of service simply involves being a willing vehicle through which love can flow into the world, holding to one's service intent while ensuring it remains pure, listening for directions from your "inner knower," then taking the next small step, followed by the next.

In Namaste Publishing's birth and growth, all manner of help was given, as needed, from both seen and unseen helpers. We have been carried, like the eagle born up by the wind, needing only to make a slight movement of wing to effect flight or a change of direction.

Life has generously given back to us and we continue to experience wonderful surprises to which we can only respond with profound gratitude.

And the beautiful beat goes on. Namaste. ◀

Constance Kellough is the founder and publisher of Namaste Publishing and the author of **The Leap: Are You Ready to Live a New Reality?**

Until 1996, my spiritual practice had been a private one so I was surprised when early that year, an inner yearning ignited and I felt called to join with others in spiritual practice – to be part of what in the East is called a *sangha*. Although this yearning was intense, I did not act on it immediately, thinking perhaps it was a passing whim and would soon fade away. But it didn't.

I was a management consultant at that time and one day at work, following a meeting in our boardroom, I mentioned my wish to John Kutchenthal, one of my colleagues. John responded, "That's interesting because I just met a fellow who arrived from England a few weeks ago and is said to be a spiritual teacher." I was surprised and delighted. "I would like to meet this fellow," I responded.

John said he would ask him if he would be open to leading meditation sessions in the office. A week later, at the end of a long workday, a small group of us gathered in anticipation. We heard a soft knock on the door; John opened it and in walked a gentle, unassuming man who was introduced to us as Eckhart Tolle.

Beginning that evening and once a week for almost a year thereafter, Eckhart came to our office at the end of the work day or we met early in the morning at John's home, where we woke ourselves up with coffee and muffins before surrendering to the bliss of stillness. At each of these sacred gatherings, we were fed a measure of pure *jana* and led into progressively deeper states of stillness



Are we dreaming?

I recently listened to a documentary about parallel universes. The suggestion is that the visible universe could lie on a membrane – combined strings of energy – floating within a higher-dimensional space. Two of these membranes could lie very close together and gravity could leak from one to the other. Of course, it is much more complex than that, but I started thinking about the concept of membranes. A membrane is a thin, pliable layer that separates what is inside from what is outside and often is permeable to some things.

I thought about how Deepak Chopra explains our bodies are mostly empty space; if you took out all the space, what is left of us would fit on the head of a pin!

I took these two ideas and speculated about what would happen if we thought of our physical form as a membrane instead of a solid object. I was thinking how stress and worry affect people. The body goes into contraction and the thoughts are 'heavy.' We talk about the weight of the world being on someone's shoulders.

If a person holds on to past hurts and resentment do these things somehow 'solidify' in the body? Does energy become blocked and does the system begin

I began to see beauty everywhere. It was like I had just arrived in this universe and was seeing everything for the first time.

to stagnate, setting the stage for illness? If we are 'weighed down' with worries, fears, distrust and the like, do we end up carrying extra physical weight?

Then I visualized my own being as a membrane. I saw myself just allowing experiences, thoughts, images to simply pass through me. I noticed them, but then let them float away. Instantly, I felt incredibly light, like I was floating. My body felt free and flexible, my consciousness felt open and alive. It was *refreshing*.

A few days after all this thinking I was flying home from vacation. Travelling can sometimes be stressful, so I decided I would just be a membrane for the duration. I would observe, but let everything pass through me.

I had the most amazing experience. I became a total observer, but more importantly I began to see beauty everywhere. It was like I had just arrived in this universe and was seeing everything for the first time.

I saw beauty in the incredible variety the human form can take. I noticed parents interacting with children, the customs agent joking with passengers. I saw art everywhere, even in the parking garage in the Seattle airport. I noticed the shape of the concrete pillars and the auras around the ceiling lights. Everything seemed effortless. It was a little like a dream.

Since returning, I have held on to my membrane metaphor. Several times each day I take a deep breath and remind myself to be a membrane – to just keep letting it all flow through because it feels so good and because, in the end, we may realize that life actually is "but a dream." ❧

Gwen Randall-Young is an author and psychotherapist in private practice. For articles and information about her books, CDs and the new "Creating Healthy Relationships" series, visit www.gwen.ca See display ad this issue.

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Constellation Kardashian



Star phenomena? People aren't looking up at the sky – they're tracking celebrities

There's a great jpeg floating around the Internet that shows the star systems within range of Earth's radio and television broadcasts. *Aldebaran*, a red giant, located about 65 light years away, is in the range of President Roosevelt's first televised speech. *Mu Arae*, a main sequence G-type star like our Sun, is about 50 light years away and would now be getting *The Twilight Zone*, *Bonanza* and *Leave it to Beaver*.

Beta Aquilae is within broadcast distance of The Beatles on *The Ed Sullivan Show*. The fab four are already old news to *Zeta Reticuli*, which recently got the Apollo moon landing. *Chi Draconis* would be getting *The Dukes of Hazzard*. *Altair* would have *Entertainment Tonight*, *Cops* and – unfortunately for any intelligent life – *The Arsenio Hall Show*. *Wolf 359* just picked up Janet Jackson's 2004 Superbowl "wardrobe malfunction." *Alpha Centauri*, the closest star system to Earth, would have the full media menu, starting backwards with the sitcom *The Big Bang Theory*.

If there is any intelligent life around this binary star system, the ETs may soon come to the conclusion that a slinky creature called "Kim Kardashian" rules our planet along with her sisters. Because right now, it sure seems that way.

On Earth, we have full-spectrum saturation by the Kardashians. It seems you cannot surf the web or turn on the tube without encountering something about the talent-free socialite and her equally unremarkable siblings. I've set my homepage to Yahoo.com because that's where my email account resides, and bodacious Kim is always there in some lifestyle update. I channel-surf and there she is with a sister, on their own reality TV show. I go to the supermarket and there she is again

at the checkout stand magazine rack. I go to the local recreation centre for a workout and citrus-tanned Kim is there too, on the cover of one of the magazines left for gym patrons. And now here she is in *Common Ground* magazine – and I'm responsible. The horror.

The daughter of celebrity lawyer Robert Kardashian, big-breasted Kim first hit public consciousness in 2007 through a sex video co-starring her friend-with-benefits, the rapper Ray J. She leveraged this Internet notoriety into tabloid sovereignty, dragging her sisters behind her like Louis Vuitton bags to the top of the Twitterverse. The pneumatic 31-year-old is like a William Gibson science fiction short story gone viral, although she undoubtedly prefers the Wikipedia entry, "American socialite, television personality, model, actress and businesswoman."

Kim's career-lite arc was foreshadowed in the rise of Paris Hilton, who also leapt from sex video amateur to international celebrity without ever bumping into a script, teleprompter or catwalk along the way. Wikipedia informs me it was Paris herself who introduced Kim to the global socialite scene. If the Hilton daughter was H1N1, a pandemic that was more likely to make people giggle than snuffle, then the daughter of O.J. Simpson's defence lawyer is weaponized Ebola: a level 4 biohazard that has zombified great swaths of media, both online and off.

The 24/7 "Kimformation" feeds on itself, in a perpetual motion machine of glossy pics, jpegs and witless gossip. No one, online or off, can seem to get a fix on how real or fake Kim is, beyond her admission of Botox use. Bloggers parse recent and past photos to determine how much reconstruction has been done. The question of

fake/real can get a bit Byzantine. How much is a genetic factor and how much is Max Factor? Or even the surgeon's scalpel? At some point, the gossip about Kim's face and body shades into straight-on epistemology.

In June 2010, *The Guardian* noted Kim's ability to attract payments of up to \$10,000 USD from sponsors for each tweet that she broadcasts. What I want to know is this: if Kim tweets and no one reads it, has she still communicated nothing of substance?

There is no need for me to describe further this woman's victories across media platforms, including the current reality television show, *Kourtney & Kim Take New York*. Until science succeeds in squeezing the "God Particle" from a complete vacuum, the Kardashians are the best example of creating headlines out of absolutely nothing. Kim herself could be any old celeb and some other vapid beauty will take her place in time. But for now she reigns supreme on the Earth's electromagnetic spectrum.

That ringlet-haired interpreter of pop culture, "Weird Al" Yankovic, has given us a new word with the "Kardash:" a period of 72 days, the length of time Kim was married to some Transformer-sized athlete whose name I can't be bothered to Google (she reportedly got a \$2 million-dollar ring out of this quickie arrangement, which she intends to keep). It occurred to me that Kardashian could serve as a perfectly good adjective, as well. I define it this way:

Kardashian | Kardashiy'n | adjective

1 Cosmetically beautified, but without the substance to back up the mass attention. 2. A state of slickly produced artifice, masquerading as the real thing.

There are many other aspects of our hi-tech, high-bandwidth culture that can be described with this adjective. Even popular music is going increasingly Kardashian, with off-key singers cutting their android albums with the aid of the pitch-correcting software program, AutoTune. Here are some other signs of our sim-culture in full swing.

Kardashian politics

Four years ago, weary US voters chose Barack Obama as President, in a benchmark moment for American race relations. Yet the campaign itself was a victory of warm and fuzzy over hard and specific, with voters sold on the abstract nouns of “hope” and “change.” Tellingly, the trade magazine *Advertising Age* named Obama’s campaign as marketer of the year for 2008, beating out runners-up Apple and Zappos.com.

The *Financial Times* reported on the public relations industry’s enthusiasm for “brand Obama.” Among those cheering were PR execs that pioneered the packaging of candidates as consumer brands 30 years ago, when they helped California governor Ronald Reagan win the White House. “Take it from the professionals, Brand Obama is a marketer’s dream,” wrote author Chris Hedges in an essay at Truthdig.com. “President Obama does one thing and Brand Obama gets you to believe another. This is the essence of successful advertising. You buy or do what the advertiser wants because of how they can make you feel.”

Upon election, America’s most Kardashian politician immediately parachuted Wall Street insiders into his administration. The University of Chicago’s former lecturer on constitutional law not only failed to reverse many of the policies of the Bush administration, he deepened and widened them, from wireless wiretapping to extraordinary renditions to bank bailouts to extending the Bush era tax cuts, to the National Defense Authorization Act, which allows any acting president to imprison any American citizen indefinitely without due process.

Closer to home, Republican-style dirty tricks seem to have accompanied the last federal election. Ottawa’s pale cipher with the helmet hair and cold, grey eyes is not visually appealing – but he is Kardashian, and the “robocall” scandal only raises further questions about deceit within the Tory social circle.

Kardashian defence policy

The 2003 invasion of Iraq was nothing if not Kardashian, with a phony WMD threat cooked up by a circle of White House neocons around Dick Cheney. The story was built on the testimony of a single alcoholic Iraqi source known by the code name “Curveball.” The neocons reanimated this pig of a tale, while the CIA and State Department reluctantly applied the lipstick. Media shills like Judith Miller of the *New York Times* did their part by attaching wings to the beast and training it to fly – not very well, but enough to convince the American public that it was some rough beast soaring towards Brooklyn.

The other bookend to this saga also seems Kardashi-

an: the story of Osama bin Laden’s murder in Abbottabad, Pakistan, by Navy Seal Team Six, the disposal of his unphotographed corpse at sea and the rumoured death of some of the team in a subsequent helicopter crash. News consumers were expected to take the storyline on faith, in spite of its ongoing tweaking by official sources.

Kardashian finance and economics

Kardashian finance kicked into high gear with Wall Street’s post-2000 explosion in securitized mortgages, sliced and diced and sold to unsuspecting buyers in ticking time-bomb packages, after being signed off by complicit rating agencies. As the crash of 2008 and the current crisis in the eurozone have demonstrated, there is no moral hazard for robber barons who are rewarded with bailouts for crashing the system – just as there is no disincentive for captured politicians to tell the people the



No matter which way we try to get an academic fix on late capitalism’s production of junk-diet infotainment, there is no longer any line separating news and advertising, justice and entertainment, war and public relations, politics and pretty much everything else.

truth about a reckoning to come. Political leaders kick the can down the road so the inevitable consequences of bad behaviour – ecological, economic and social – are left to the next administration or generation (or, at least, the next Kardash, in 72 days).

When I say Kardashian, I’m talking about the triumph of surface over substance, of artifice over reality, of public relations over common sense, across many spheres of endeavour. It goes without saying the outlines have been around for decades. Back in the fifties, sociologist Erving Goffman wrote about the social construction of reality and the American penchant for turning performance into a social mask. In the nineties, Neal Gabler argued in his book, *Life: The Movie*, that American consumers have incorporated the values of film and television into their daily lives, becoming performers in their own private worlds.

No matter which way we try to get an academic

fix on late capitalism’s production of junk-diet infotainment, there is no longer any line separating news and advertising, justice and entertainment, war and public relations, politics and pretty much everything else. And that’s been the case for some time. Just after the Gulf War victory in 1990, I was relaxing in a Seattle hotel room, watching TV. Henry Kissinger was doing the weather on *Good Morning America* – something he had always wanted to do, he told the hosts. I switched over to another channel and there was General Schwarzkopf marching in a victory parade with Mickey Mouse. The general and Mickey were singing together.

A real general celebrating a made-for-TV war with a fake rat. A former Nixon advisor and accused war criminal pretending he was a weatherman. It was a Kardashian moment, back when Kim herself was still playing with Barbie.

Fictitious wars, fake leaders, phony celebrities, simulated worlds online and off. So what else is new? Fakery and deception has been going gangbusters on this planet ever since the first orchids evolved organs that resembled the female versions of certain insects, thereby tricking males into pollination duties. Human beings didn’t invent deception, though language allowed us to lie about where the good berries were. The true evolutionary novelty humans brought to the game was gossip: the idle parsing of the behaviour of others. In fact, some anthropologists theorize that gossip was the prime mover in the evolution of language. A hominid’s survival hinged on the ability to assess and properly predict the behaviour of its own kind – and sometimes getting a leg up on a competitor with a tall tale. So today’s trash-talking checkout rags and celebrity television may not be so much a cultural maladaptation as a Darwinian overshoot. After all, it’s only a few million years from the savanna to the supermarket, a mere eyeblink in geological time.

Today, the rise of digital media has taken gossip to previously unimaginable heights, as traditional media retreats from old-school who-what-when-where-why journalism. As newsrooms’ budgets are slashed and advertising revenue dries up for media outlets, the cultivation of gossip becomes more seductive. The glossy celebrity magazines “Pimple” and “Pus” – sorry, I mean *People* and *Us* – outsell all other Time Warner publications put together, while the celeb-stalking *TMZ* has sprung from an obscure online tabloid to a massively popular cable show.

I don’t want to give the impression I’m somehow above celebrity culture myself. If you stick me in a plane with a drink in one hand and copy of *Pimple* or *Pus* in the other, I’m a happy camper. Some disreputable part of my brain hungers for this gossipy mind-candy, which is why I usually try to avoid it. It’s like info-crack for me, as it is for millions of others. But it doesn’t necessarily mean the End Times are upon us simply because millions of shoppers are tossing remedial reading into their grocery carts, or turning to Perez Hilton for celebrity updates. That fate may have to wait until an entire generation has visions *cont’d p.38...*



Cure for plant blindness

A colleague told me his toddler was wandering through a neighbourhood park picking up twigs and sticks, brandishing them as tools for digging, poking and tapping. Suddenly, the boy stopped and pointed excitedly to the canopy of branches above. "Look papa. Sticks come from trees!" Mentally reconnecting fallen branches to their home on the trunk is obvious to an adult, but many of us have lost our profound sense of wonder about the interconnected web of life that surrounds us. This is especially true when it comes to the plant world.

Trees filter pollutants, absorb carbon dioxide and breathe out life-giving oxygen and plants provide food and medicine. However, most folks are largely oblivious to our photosynthesizing companions. This has led some researchers to examine "plant blindness," a condition whereby we cannot see the forest *or* the trees.

Most youngsters can identify hundreds of corporate logos and branded products, but can't name the plants and trees in their backyards.

In 1998, American botanists James Wandersee and Elisabeth Schussler defined plant blindness as "the inability to see or notice the plants in one's own environment," which leads "to the inability to recognize the importance of plants in the biosphere and in human affairs." This prognosis rings true in an age when most youngsters can identify hundreds of corporate logos and branded products, but can't name the plants and trees in their backyards.

Why are we suffering from a nagging case of plant blindness? There is no simple, scientific answer, but Wandersee and Schussler argued that plants don't capture our attention like animals and other stimuli. To the human eye, they are largely static. Thus, we tend to lump plants together into a green backdrop, failing to distinguish between the millions of blades of grass or multitude of plant species.

Part of the problem may be related to the overwhelming amount of data our eyes send to our brains. Danish author Tor Nørretranders estimates that the human eye generates more than 10 million bits of data per second. Our brain extracts only about 40 bits of data per second and only 16 bits reach our conscious vision and attention. Unfortunately, nature's greenery tends to be drowned out in a visual flurry of noise and shinier items of interest.

How do we reconnect with nature and learn to give plants their due? The answer is simple. People, especially kids, need to connect with nature in their everyday environment and we need to bring more to our neighbourhoods, public spaces and backyards. It might surprise you, but most urban spaces are already jam-packed with natural wonders.

After volunteering in an urban apple orchard at the Spadina Museum in Toronto, Laura Reinsborough began seeing the world through "fruit goggles." Once she became familiar with fruit-bearing trees in the city, she suddenly noticed them everywhere. This largely untapped urban bounty spurred her to found Not Far From the Tree, a group that has organized volunteers to help harvest more than 14,000 kilograms of fruit from hundreds of backyard trees over the past four years.

If you want to help bring nature to your community, join one of the many groups working to enhance it. Local efforts to restore wetlands, forests, parks and public spaces provide great opportunities to get hands-on outside time and boost your community's natural wealth. ◀

Dr. David Suzuki is a scientist, broadcaster, author and co-founder of the David Suzuki Foundation. Written with contributions from David Suzuki Foundation Communications Specialist Jode Roberts. Learn more at www.davidsuzuki.org

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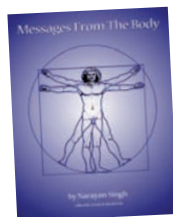


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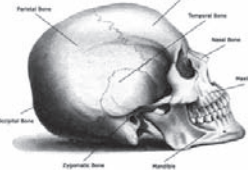
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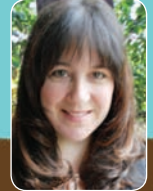
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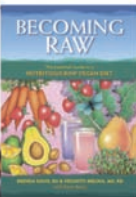
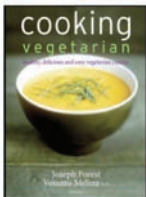
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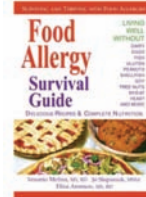
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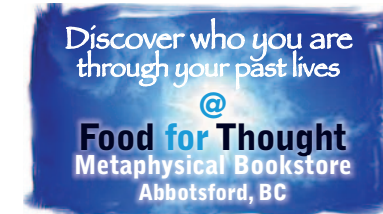
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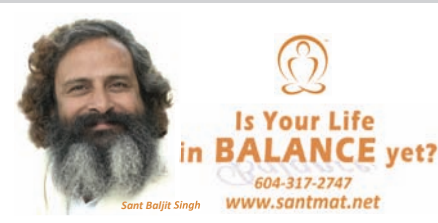
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LETTERS

Moving past faultfinding

The article by US Senator Bernard Sanders (*Time for Change at the Federal Reserve, Common Ground*, March 2012) detailing the depth of the deception and greed on the part of Wall Street and the US Federal Reserve is certainly a wakeup call for anyone who still has a belief in the fairness of the money system. But to suggest "Americans, through no fault of their own, have lost their jobs, homes, life savings" etc., is ignoring several blatant realities. If one were to examine US history – Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States* is a good place to start – it becomes apparent that the bankers and top guns of that country have been rounding up all of the world's goods (money, land, commodities, natural resources, war toy companies, laws and legislations, education and media facilities) at the expense of the other 99 percent (workers, slaves, indigenous peoples, neighbouring countries, far-away countries, the environment) since day one. The current situation is merely the inevitable result of our failure to a) pay attention b) stand up for justice, equality and basic human rights wherever and whenever it arises and c) divest ourselves of our participation in hierarchy, specifically noticeable in our increased emulation of

rich and famous and wasteful lifestyles. If we are going to be complicit in this paradigm of non-sharing when it is "to our benefit," we cannot really cry in our beer when the house of cards collapses – as it is. Deeply examining where we feel better than "other people" or other species can be very eye opening. Practising living in a cooperative, un wasteful, ecologically aware and simple fashion moves us past faultfinding into creating a life worth living for everyone.

– Jo Phillips, Sooke, BC.

The campaign for mandatory labelling A letter from Nature's Path co-founders

Nature's Path is pledging \$500,000 to support your right to know. Join the army of concerned citizens petitioning the FDA by taking part in the Just Label It campaign and make your voice heard (www.justlabelit.org).

From our humble beginnings many decades ago, Nature's Path was, and is, totally committed to organics and working in harmony with nature. In 1990, when we first learned about the environmentally toxic and health risks of a new, but unnatural, gene-splicing technology then termed as Genetically Modified Organisms, we decided to take a firm and adamant stand against the use of GMOs in all of our

products and made bold statements on our packaging about it. Today, we have laws against the use of genetically engineered (GE) foods in all organically certified products. But we had to fight for it. It's not enough, however. GE ingredients are now in about 85 percent of every food in your local grocery store – but it's not labelled.

**GE ingredients are now
 in about 85 percent
 of every food in your
 local grocery store –
 but it's not labelled.**

We firmly believe that you have a citizen's right to know what's in your food and that genetically engineered foods should be clearly labelled so we can all make an informed choice. Isn't this our democratic right? Currently, not. Let's change that.

In what we believe is an exciting pivotal game-changer for all North Americans, Californians are gathering signatures right now to get an initiative on the 2012 ballot that would require manufacturers

to label GE ingredients for sale in the state. If this passes, it will be a huge step towards the transparency people deserve. If Californians get mandatory GE labelling, the rest of the country and Canada will ultimately follow. Once people know what is in their food, they can then make the informed choice to avoid the health and environmental risk of GMOs.

And the beauty of this is it's not going to cost the consumer more money, as it only involves a simple label declaration, but the implications are far reaching. In a large advance poll, 75 percent+ of Californians said they would vote for mandatory labelling of genetically engineered foods.

And so we are putting our money where our mouth is and we are contributing \$500,000 to support the campaign to make this ballot initiative and mandatory GE labelling a reality. It is something we feel passionately about, but we are also doing it on behalf of you – the families and farmers that eat our food and rely on our business. We are urging all stakeholders in the organic community to step up to the plate and make a difference with their time, money and resources, for a big win over the giant biotech industry.

– Arran & Ratana Stephens, co-founders of the ever-growing Nature's Path Family, www.naturespath.com



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datebook@commonground.ca

MAY 6

J. Krishnamurti with A. Anderson.
Responsibility and Relationship. Free DVD
showing, dialogue, refreshments. Vancouver
Public Library downtown, 7th floor, Board
Breakout Room, 2PM. Register at meetup.com/krishnamurtigroup@live.com, 604-354-1534.

MAY 8

Brahma Kumaris Meditation Centre, Vancouver:
Find peace, power and purpose through
meditation. Learn to master your mind and
senses. Introductory series of five lessons
beginning May 8 at 7pm. Please call 604-436-
4795 to register. All courses are free of charge.
www.bkwsu.org/canada

MAY 11-13

EPIC Vancouver sustainable consumer show
& eco-marketplace. An annual celebration of
planet-friendly living. 300 exhibitors, inspiring
ideas, exciting entertainment and smart
shopping opportunities.
www.vancouver.epicexpo.com

MAY 11-13

Introduction to Foot Reflexology commences
Certificate Weekend Training Course.
Introduction 7:30 PM, \$10; Course \$395. Pacific
Institute of Reflexology (604) 875-8818,
www.pacificreflexology.com

MAY 12-13

"Radiant relationships" \$250, Heal pain and
abandonment patterns and step into Radiant
relationships with Dr. Newton Kondaveti.
\$50 off first 10 spots.
www.brownpaperickets.com/event/239528
604-736-8522.

MAY 18-20

Explore Buddhism and Krishnamurti with
Dr. Hillary Rodrigues. At Swanwick Centre, a
beautiful 32-acre, ocean-front sanctuary near
Victoria, BC. swanwick@shaw.ca,
250-744-3354, www.swanwickcentre.ca

MAY 19

Water Is Life Event: Roundhouse Community
Centre, 1-4:30pm. Displays, presentations, talks
& screening of Rise of the Salmon People by
Jeremy Williams. More info at
www.falsecreekwatershed.org

MAY 20

Friends for Life Fund-raiser with Constance
Kellough, founder and publisher of Namaste
Publishing: Constance shares the story of how
she came to be Eckhart Tolle's publisher and
how to ensure your life is full of miracles. Hosted
by Friends for Life, a non-profit organization
that enhances the wellness of individuals living
with very serious illnesses. Minimum suggested
donation \$5, 1459 Barclay Street, 2pm.

May 24

"Weight Loss - Lymphatic System Workshop":
Metropolitan Relaxation Studio, 304-350 East
2nd Ave., 7-8PM, \$44. Buy 1 - get 1 free. 778-
997-9642, www.metropolitanrelaxation.com

MAY 25

"Miracle Experience - Miracle Making",
magical stories and inspired song: a

collaborative experience in consciousness,
intention and love. With Lynn Woodland, author
of Making Miracles and Constance Kellough,
President of Namaste Publishing and Author
of The Leap. Unity of Vancouver, 5840 Oak
Street, 7:30pm. Tickets: \$30, Banyen Books or
sciencetosage.com

MAY 26

Open House: The Institute of Holistic Nutrition
Info on course/curriculum career opportunities.
Natural health exhibit, book sale, door prizes,
complimentary lectures. 10am-3:30pm, 604
West Broadway, ste. 300. Visit
www.instituteofholisticnutrition.com

MAY 26

"Miracle Making" - An Experiential Workshop
with Lynn Woodland, author of Making
Miracles. Come join the experiment in miracle-
making. This day will surely boggle your mind,
touch your heart and change your perception
of reality. It also may just change your life!
Vancouver Masonic Centre, 1495 West 8th
Ave., 10-5pm. Tickets \$125, Banyen Books or
sciencetosage.com

MAY 27

Adam DreamHealer Heal Yourself workshop
Vancouver. Experience Self- Empowerment as
Adam orchestrates 2 group healing sessions &
introduces his new DVD. All registration
www.dreamhealer.com

MAY 27-JUN 1

Heal Body Memory & Trauma with Somatic
Archaeology™! Intergenerational Healing
Workshop with Ruby Gibson, Hollyhock,
Cortes Island. www.rubygibson.com
www.hollyhock.ca

MAY 29 & JUN 5 / JUN 11 & 18

Emotional Eating... you are not alone! An
experiential 2-part workshop to explore
your relationship with food. Port Moody
or Vancouver. Registration/info: susan@intouchcounselling.ca or 604-813-2180.

JUN 1

Raise Your Vibration: Free Lecture 6pm,
Paradigm Shift then Singing Bowl Sound Circle
7pm- \$35. Register at
www.richbc.eventbrite.com, 778-297-7870.

JUN 1-3

Three one-day Vertical Reflexology Courses
with Lynne Booth (developer of Vertical
Reflexology visiting from UK) Cost: \$200 per
course. Pacific Institute of Reflexology (604)
875-8818, www.pacificreflexology.com

JUN 2

The Great Bear Rainforest: a Celebration
of Nature, Music & Dance. Fundraiser for
PacificWild.org. Evening concerts at Trout Lake
Community with Rick Buckman Coe, Shine,
Pepe Danza and others. Guest speaker Chief
Phil Lane Jr. Tickets and info:
www.thegreatbearrainforest.org

JUN 2

Raise Your Vibration: Free lecture 11:30am,
Reflections Books. 12:30pm: Honor Yourself/

Wisdom workshop; 3pm Singing Bowl Circle.
Register at www.reflectionbc.eventbrite.com,
604-939-6000.

JUN 3

Raise Your Vibration: Workshop & Sacred
Sound Circle. Saskatchewan event.
Refreshments incl. \$50. See details/register at
www.saltcoats.eventbrite.com
888-767-8423 ext 3.

JUN 5

Highpoint of the Spiritual Year: Festival of
Humanity. Join us in meditation for world
transformation. FREE. 7-9 pm, Roundhouse
Community Centre www.taracanada.org,
604-983-0926.

JUN 22

Discover Your Goddess Archetype: A Shamanic
Workshop for Women. Identify the essence
of your true nature. Shamanic journeying,
dance, & more. With Shamanic Practitioner
Sonya Weir, www.eaglefireshamaniccoaching.com 7PM. Email sonyaweir@uniserve.com to
register or call 778-227-2939. By donation.

JUN 29-JUL 2

Calm Abiding Meditation Retreat with Tibetan/
Australian meditation master Lama Choedak
Rinpoche at UBC Vancouver. Rare opportunity.
Details at pnwretreats.com

SEPT 24-28

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www.soulspringwellness.ca

ONGOING

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a Community HU. 1st Friday 8PM, 333
Chesterfield, North Vancouver, 15996 84th,
Surrey. 1st Tuesday 7:30PM, 6550 Bonsor,
Burnaby, www.eckankar-bc.ca

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www.crystalinevision.com for dates.

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Sunday @ 11 AM for practical spirituality
with great music. Meditation: 10:15 AM. 1880
Triumph Street, Suite 8 (at Victoria Drive),
Vancouver. Info: 604-321-1225,
www.cslvancouver.com

SOS (Science of Spirituality): See Resource
Directory listing in Spiritual Practices for
schedule in Richmond, Vancouver & Victoria.
604-277-1247. All Welcome. www.sos.org

TUESDAYS

Reflexology Student Clinic 6-10pm. One- hour
sessions \$20. By appointment only. Pacific
Institute of Reflexology (604) 875-8818.
www.pacificreflexology.com

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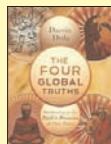
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DOXA reviews



Christened "Bear 71" at age three, a mother grizzly was under lifelong surveillance by motion detection cameras.

The annual documentary festival DOXA is on this month. The Vancouver fest is hosting 72 screenings across five different venues from May 4 to 13. DOXA opens with the NFB Digital Studio's interactive documentary *Bear 71*, which makes extensive use of surveillance footage of an electronically tagged grizzly in Banff National Park. The film also challenges conventions about documentary presentation itself. You can find it at nfb.ca.

While technology is a recurring theme of DOXA this year, *Vinylmania: When Life Runs at 33 Revolutions Per Minute* is an enjoyable delve into the retro world of record collecting in the digital age. A snappily edited and tuneful ode to platters, it joins vinyl obsessives from Prague, Tokyo, San Francisco and London. Of course, the analogue versus vinyl argument crops up, but this is not just about records 'sounding better.' Vinyl has a look, feel and a smell. Character. *Vinylmania* reveals some extreme cases of collecting, but musical montages and entertaining interviews help one appreciate why vinyl warms the parts that digital can't reach.

Austrian cinema has a reputation for relentless, but resonant bleakness. Nikolaus Geyrhalter's 88-minute documentary *Abendland*, filmed only at night, fits that bill. In a series of long takes, Geyrhalter's unobtrusive camera builds a vision of a modern dystopia, from babies born into hospital incubators, to a crematorium worker operating a coffin conveyor and a crane. As countryman Erwin Wagenhofer did so well in his critique of the food industry *We Feed the World*, *Abendland* provides a stark, but salutary, warning about the de-humanizing aspects of our mechanized, always-on society. Watching airport toilet cleaners, CCTV operators, online sex workers or a night patrol officer at work, I found myself wanting more narrative infill than the disciplined,

observational style allowed. But the patiently framed scenes and juxtapositions – such as rowdy bonhomie in a huge beer hall followed by a drunken reveller passed out on a hospital trolley – convey a deep sense of malaise about this brilliantly lit world.

After that, *Tahrir-Liberation Square* is like a step back in time. Since the Arab Spring started in January 2011, Tahrir Square has become a symbol of revolution, inspiring similar events across the world, including the Occupy movement. The spirit of the Egyptian spring is vividly captured in *Tahrir-Liberation Square*, a street level account of the days that led to the overthrow of Egyptian tyrant Hosni Mubarak. Shot handheld, the film sets you down so deeply in the thick of revolutionary Tahrir Square, you can almost smell the sweat, tobacco and fire smoke. Chants provide an ongoing soundtrack to the uprising with many intimate shots of jubilant protestors bouncing up and down calling, "The Egyptians are here! The Egyptians are here!" and similar slogans.

The absence of a narrative lends a certain fluidity to the action and like any participant, you sometimes must piece together unfolding events through fragments of information. You also get a sense of the motivations and tensions among participants – liberals fearing Islamists' motives, women seeking more rights. With tensions rising in Egypt again, this is a timely piece.

The festival closes with Alison Klayman's *Ai Weiwei: Never Sorry*, a portrait of the Chinese subversive artist. In particular, it follows Weiwei's battle with government censorship when documenting the deaths of 5,000 schoolchildren, killed in the 2008 Sichuan Province earthquake. With talk of a Chinese spring, this will be one to watch. (www.doxafestival.ca)

Robert Alstead writes at www.2020Vancouver.com

... Olson from p.27

of *The Matrix* dancing in their heads, mediated either through Google goggles or megastar-endorsed implants.

In any case, there are already harbingers of generational revolt to celeb-heavy digital overkill. According to a recent essay in the *New York Times* by Pico Iyer, marketers are trying to pre-empt what they see as the next big thing among the young: retreat from their gadgets into prolonged periods of electronic silence.

Not everything around us is Kardashian, thank God or Gaia. We are still capable of having unmediated experiences with nature and other human beings. In fact, these experiences become all the more precious as the world and people around us are increasingly

digitized, mashed-up, hacked and sold back to us the real thing. At this stage, you cannot spurn the electronic gadgets that rule your schedule; but you are still capable of using them critically and unplugging once in a while to reconnect with the average-looking, non-famous human beings nearby.

Meanwhile, back in outer space... *Alpha Centauri* appears to the naked eye as the brightest star in the southern constellation *Centaurus*. It is actually a double star, like the twin suns that hung in the skies of Tatooine in *Star Wars*. If there are any radio-friendly intelligent beings near these interstellar tango partners, they

should be getting the first electromagnetic ripples about Kim and her sisters anytime now. We probably shouldn't hold our breath waiting for a response. Scientists have been puzzled by the century-long absence of discernible radio signals from other civilizations in the Milky Way. Perhaps this static doesn't argue so much against extraterrestrial intelligence as *for* it. Considering what Earth has beamed out already over the past 60 years, the ETs may have chosen to kill the cable, or at least point their dishes away from Earth – sparing them from thinking our planet is ruled by megastar Kim and her orbiting siblings. ☐

www.olscribbler.wordpress.com

"Blessed are the Peacemakers, for they shall be called the Children of God"
~ Matthew 5:9

"For it isn't enough to talk about peace. One must believe it. And it's not enough to believe in it. One must work at it."
~ Eleanor Roosevelt

"The ones who are crazy enough to think that they can change the world, are the ones who do." ~ Steve Jobs

Walk for Peace

"The walk for peace, made me realise anything is possible"

- Joseph 62 was 32 then

THE NEXT GENERATION

"You may say I'm a dreamer, but I'm not the only one I hope someday you'll join us and the world will live as one"

~ John Lennon

"I walked with my father, brother and child, 3 generations for peace"

~ Joseph 62 was 32 then

"Be the peace you want to see in the world" ~ Ghandi

30th anniversary 1982-2012

"Life is the dancer and you are the dance." ~ Eckhart Tolle

June 30th

"Hope is a waking dream."

~ Aristotle

**Saturday 12 noon, gather at Kitsilano beach, for walk over Burrard St bridge to Sunset beach in the West End
2pm entertainment, music & celebration**

*"There is no way to peace
peace is the way"*

- A. J. Muste

"Live your beliefs and you can turn the world around."

~ Henry David Thoreau

"I grew up walking for peace"

~ Hazel 34 (was 4 in 1982)

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May 5th, May 12th & May 19th

12 noon to 2 PM in the main sanctuary of Canadian Memorial United Church & Centre for Peace

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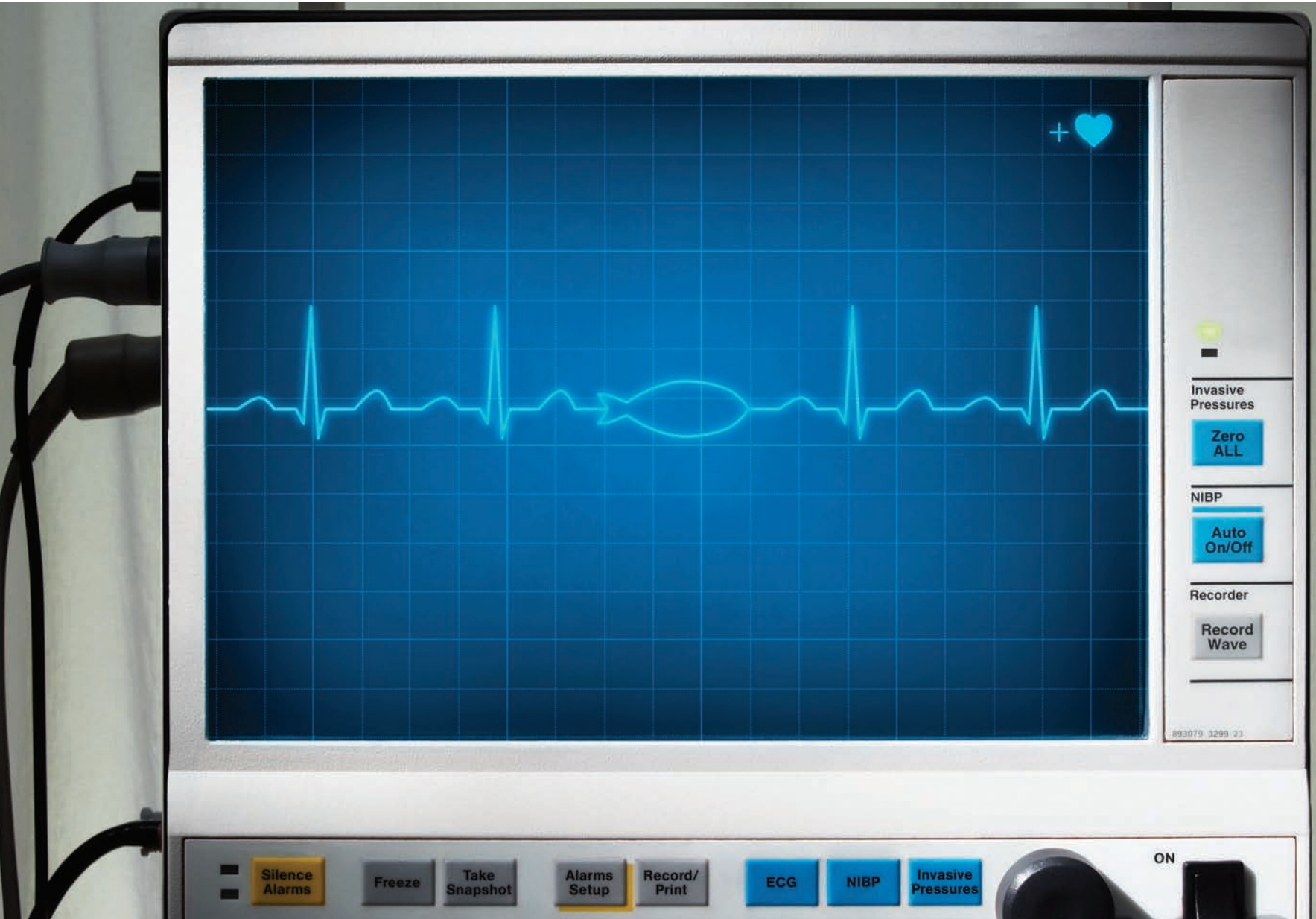
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